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## Tracking an Invisible Great Trek

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## 8.

# Social mobility in the ‘New South Africa’: Professional Hunting

The first person a hunting client meets when landing at a South-African airport is the Professional Hunter (PH) who guides the client during the entire hunting trip. As we have seen in a previous chapter the hunting game consists of a social hierarchy in which different categories of people perform specific roles during the game. Professional hunters in the Eastern Cape are generally young white men from the countryside who feel they are very different from the farm workers participating in the hunt as trackers and skinners. Overall, I showed that farm workers are incorporated outsiders in the hunting game whose uncivilised status is confirmed in the game’s ritual procedures whereby they are situated at the bottom of the hunting hierarchy, close to the social realm of the wildlife. Here I want to explore further how roles and positions in the Karoo trophy-hunting scene are tied to both race and class categories and how these are linked to land ownership patterns in the region. Is it possible for black farm dwellers to take up different positions in the power configuration related to the trophy-hunting world?

The appearance of the professional hunter is part of the professionalization of the hunting safari that emerged in Africa during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Steinhart, 2006). Initially, it was the Professional *White* Hunter that mediated European and American clients between their “civilized” world and the African “savage” world of wild animals and natives (ibid: 132-3). The symbolic meaning of the PH reinforced the image of African inferiority and subordination formed during colonialism (ibid: 2). In this chapter two trajectories of local PHs employed on private trophy hunting farms around Cradock illustrate how the meaning of the profession has developed in a South African post-colonial context. First, I describe the role and the position of the contemporary PH in the trophy-hunting

landscape of the Karoo Midlands. In this locality, specific ideas exist about the qualities and skills a good PH must possess to satisfy the client. These ideas are often related to, or justified with, assumptions about the preferences of hunting clients. An academic study into hunters' preferences seems to be biased towards a problematic and particular image of African wilderness landscapes. In the second paragraph I portray the separate ways in which two Karoo professional hunters, one white Afrikaans son of a commercial farmer and one black Xhosa farm worker, have been introduced and socialized into the hunting game. Their trajectories of becoming farm managers and PHs, and their diverging farming prospects, evidence the importance of being embedded in social networks in order to access land, wildlife, and a place to belong in the Karoo. The stories further reveal the salience of race in enabling upward mobility in the trophy-hunting business. In this context it proves that it is extremely hard to tip the balance of powers in favour of farm dwellers.

## **Professional Hunting in the Karoo**

Hunting clients are accompanied by a PH throughout their safari and it is very well possible the men met before on previous trips or on one of the hunting conventions in their country of origin. The PH is a certified hunter with his own outfitter business, or employed on a game farm. There are a few PH schools in the Eastern Cape to obtain a PH licence. The typical profile of PHs that I met on private hunting farms in the Karoo consisted of white men, both Afrikaans and English speaking, with a background in farming and/or hunting<sup>143</sup>. These men are sons of sheep farmers or grew up in commercial farming areas where they were introduced to hunting at an early age.

The position of the PH on the trophy-hunting farm is different from other farm workers and the earnings are significantly higher. Depending on the work arrangement (free-lance or employed) the PH generates income from several components of his work: hunting fees, commission, monthly salary for general

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<sup>143</sup> During fieldwork I have met one South African female professional hunter. There is a novel written by a Danish female PH called Natasha Illum Berg titled 'Rivers of Red Earth' about the experiences of the "only female big game hunter in East Africa". This woman went to South Africa during the 1970s and writes nostalgically about her experiences in Tanzania where she guided hunting tourists in a business sector dominated by men.

farm work, and hunting tips. The Karoo PHs mention amounts of 600-800 rand daily hunting fees and commission if the client is persuaded to hunt more animals than initially planned. The most substantial additional income is derived from the hunting tips varying from 50 to 150 US dollars a day. The PH, who naturally develops a close relationship with his client as personal guide, receives the bulk of these tips and receives them directly from the client. Other staff members on the farm share tips awarded by the client to 'the staff' and farmers 'save' this money to pay farm workers an extra bonus at the end of the year. All in all, PH wages easily can be 10 times higher than that of the average farm worker, tracker or domestic servant who earns something resembling the minimum wage which was 1332 rand in 2009.

The PH attire further sets him apart from other workers on the trophy-hunting farm. His outfit is distinctly different from the farm worker overalls, and resembles the clothing style of the hunting client. Throughout the hunt the PH and his client are in close proximity of each other, while there is a considerable spatial and social distance towards farm workers. The PH constantly communicates with the client to make sure he remains satisfied. The risks and levels of trust required in the hunting game take the hunter-client relationship beyond the level of commercial transaction. The PH must be as much of a gentleman and sportsman as his client (Steinhart, 2006:132). The interdependency between hunter and client is a tension whereby the client's power depends on his client status and the enabling financial resources he invested in it, but for his success he eventually has to rely on the know-how of the PH. What does a PH do for the client? During the trophy hunt the PH drives the pick-up truck, he selects the animals that are hunted, he takes pictures of the clients with the trophy immediately after it is shot, and celebrates a successful hunt with the client afterwards starting with a firm handshake and ritual congratulations.

The dedicated care a PH takes of his client is not limited to hunting activities. He entertains the client in the evening and wakes the client up in the morning, also after a heavy night drinking, he makes sure the client is fed and provides him with clean clothes and material, he carefully monitors the moods and needs of the client and adjusts the safari programme to it.



**Photo left (D. Snijders): PH in front, anticipating selection of an animal.**  
**Photo right (F. Brandt): Client in front, shooting when PH gives accord.**

In sum, the PH needs people's skills as much as technical hunting skills. In the Karoo, these skills requirements are related to notions of cultural differences that shape the image of the ideal PH.

During one of the many conversations with John Smith I ask the farmer if he can imagine one of his black trackers becoming a PH one day. After all, they know the environment and the animals very well. John says he cannot imagine one of his farm workers in the position of PH. "No, they must take the client out and clients want to talk with somebody at night and drink. That, they cannot do". The underlying assumption is that American or European hunters do not want to engage with black Africans as their PH during and after the hunting activities because they cannot socialize with them when the hunting game is over. This image of the ideal PH profile is very persistent and also assumes that black professional hunters do not want to engage with clients the way white PHs do. One day on Smith's Hunting Safaris I browse through a hunting magazine and see an article about a trophy-hunt guided by a black PH from the Karoo. The article contains a written story of the hunt and a photo of the hunter, the trophy and the PH. I show the article in the farm's office and asked whether John and one of his managers knows this PH as up to that moment I had not met knew of any black PH in the area. The response came quickly: "he is not the PH; they probably just did that for the magazine".

Later, when I met the PH from the photo he confirms the prevalence of such reactions to his appearance in the sector<sup>144</sup>.

When I drive through town there are people who watch me. They see that I am driving a bakkie and they wonder. Or when I appear at the gun place at the airport, people watch. There was a PH who once asked me what I was doing there. I told him I was fetching a client because I was his PH. The other PHs looked at me and one man asked: are you a PH?! I said yes. He asked me who I worked for. I answered who I worked for. He looked down and said 'O'.... They could not believe it.

The experiences of the black PH indicate his unusual position in the established and outsiders configuration in the Karoo where PHs and outfitters are almost exclusively white men with an established position. This structural imbalance is

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<sup>144</sup> Field note 5 February 2011.

perpetuated through the perception that black men cannot socialize with white hunting clients because they are different kinds of people. Assumptions about the preferences of tourists are used to justify the white profile of the Karoo PH. Who constructs such expectations and images of the African hunting field and how are these images inscribed in practices on the ground? A study, published in a conservation magazine, suggests that the ideas of South-African hunting operators do not always match with the client expectations. Through a survey at two major USA hunting conventions the researchers mapped the hunting preferences of hunting operators in Africa and potential American clients (Lindsey et al., 2006a). They asked potential clients what their hunting preferences were and compared their perceptions and preferences to those of hunting operators. One of the striking findings is that both experienced and inexperienced hunters are more willing to hunt in areas where people and cattle are present, than operators *think* hunters are willing to (2006: 287-8). The authors conclude however that “the willingness of most clients to hunt where people and livestock are present could be perceived as *conflicting* with their stated desire to hunt in *wilderness areas*” (2006a:289 emphasis added by author). This interpretation reveals that the authors’ conception of “wilderness areas” portrays a landscape without people and domestic animals in it. They continue to argue that “however, clients often indicated that they enjoy experiencing local African culture, and we believe that the presence of people leading traditional lifestyles in remote areas may even enhance the ‘wild’ feel to an area among western hunters” (2006a:289). In saying so the researchers reinforce the image of Africans as “traditional” natives who encounter a ‘civilised’ hunting clientele in their country. The study marginally addresses how industry perceptions shape the hunting landscape and its impact on African people. In fact, the analysis fails to question certain perceptions (and perceptions) in the industry and reproduces romantic notions of “wild” Africa and “traditional” Africans living in it. Nevertheless, Lindsey et al. (2006a) claim that the findings from the survey indicate the potential of clients’ preferences to drive positive change in the industry. It seems these positive contributions mainly consist of trickle-down benefits rather than black rural people being directly involved in the trophy-hunting industry.

The hunting operators' image of the African hunting field, and the positions of different categories of people in it, is shaped by local power relations instead of hunters' preferences. Various game farmers and professional hunters argued that 'they', meaning black farm workers, do things differently and due to this cultural distinction there is a lack of shared understanding about the meanings of the trophy hunt. Interestingly, Steward Burns from 'Karoo Hunting' decided, against all odds, to train one of his Xhosa farm workers to become a PH. This man was mentioned in the hunting magazine. The farmer's decision was far from self-evident and he explains that the idea emerged because he had many bad experiences with visiting free-lance PHs hunting on his farm. Initially Steward was not sure if it would be a good idea to train one of his farm workers to become a PH on the farm:

We did not know if it would be acceptable because most of the clients are white. So I asked a marketing guy in the USA and he said: 'No, they do not have a problem with it'. They hunt all over Africa; in Congo they hunt with the pygmies. It is the way we think!

Reassured the farmer went ahead with his plan. Luvuyo Molo, the farm worker, initially felt apprehensive about the idea as he also knew the world of PHs is predominantly white. He was unsure whether he should take the farmer's offer to be sent to PH school where he would surely be the only black participant in the course. He expected to be disappointed and thought that he would receive poorer education than the white participants because he is black. So far, his world has been shaped by apartheid's Bantu education system that deprived black people of equal education and aimed to keep them in subordinate positions. Hence reluctantly he accepted Steward's offer and to his own surprise he succeeded and enjoyed the PH course<sup>145</sup>.

We were equal; I can say I went to one of the best schools. They have courage and I did not experience that they were on one side, we were all one. We are all human! It's only our skin colour that is different! But I felt very good among them and my heart was not on one side. We did it together.

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<sup>145</sup> Interview 4 January 2010.



In the following section the trajectory of Luvuyo Molo is presented together with the career of a 'typical' white PH named Johan de Wet. Both men are employed as farm managers and PH on trophy-hunting farms in the Cradock region. The similarities between the two men are plenty; both have been employed as PH on a trophy-hunting farm for several years when I met them, both grew up working on a sheep farm in the region, they speak fluent Afrikaans and sufficient English, both men particularly appreciate the 'outdoor' lifestyle related to hunting and farming and both envision a future in hunting and/or farming in the region. The differences between them are shaped by the past and the legacy of racial classification in society. They are embedded in social networks with different linkages to the hunting sector. Johan's classification as white during apartheid ensured him a good education, an upbringing in a family of land owners, access to capital and knowledge, and a confident attitude. Luvuyo's classification as black ensured marginal education, a family dispossessed of land and forced to become cheap labourers on white-owned commercial farms, limited access to land and capital, and a determination to prevent his offspring from the consequences of structural disadvantage. The personal experiences and career developments of Luvuyo and Johan illustrate how spatial and racial constructions enable and disable opportunities and social mobility in the trophy-hunting sector. Their stories show the social boundaries erected by the established in the countryside that make it difficult to topple the power configuration inherited from the past. The appearance of the black PH threatens the image that the established have of themselves and the outsiders.

### **When I shot my first buck**

Luvuyo and Johan have been introduced and socialised in the hunting game at different stages in their lives. Luvuyo is born as the son of a farm dweller family that has resided and laboured for generations on the land owned by the Burns' family. Johan is born as the son of a farm owner whose family has been farming livestock in a Karoo valley for generations. It is interesting to compare the moment when Luvuyo and Johan shot their first buck.

When I was six years old I shot my first springbuck. My dad had fetched my older brothers to hunt and I complained the whole day: 'I want to shoot, I want

to shoot'. And very late, just before it got dark, my father said 'ok, you can shoot'. His rifle was way too big for a small boy like me [laughs] so it did not suit me at all, but I positioned the rifle like this [shows how he held rifle] and I shot. It [the back of the rifle] cut me between my eyes and I was bleeding, but I had shot my springbuck. And after that I hunted every year when my dad and his friends organised a *voorsit jag* (driven hunt) on our farms<sup>146</sup>.

The first time I shot a buck in my life was in 2005...There was a man from overseas that worked with Steward Burns and he took me to the shooting range with his gun before I went to PH school. Steward already taught me how to shoot because as a professional hunter you need to know how to shoot. Then, when the foreign man was there Steward said to him "take your gun and shoot a buck with him, two buck". Then I went with him and that was the first buck I shot in my life<sup>147</sup>.

Johan, whose first-buck experience is described in the first excerpt, has been hunting with rifles from a very young age. Except from the organised driven hunts in which he structurally participated on the commercial farms in the area, every holiday and free moment on their goat and sheep farm was spent roaming over the farmlands together with the children of the farm workers. Johan and his brothers shot birds with a *windboks* (airgun) and the worker's children used their self-made *rekkers* (catapults) to join in the hunt; the catch used to be immediately roasted and consumed in the field. After the airgun Johan began to shoot *dassies* (hyrax/rock rabbit) on the farm with a .22 rifle and further developed his hunting skills in a playful manner. The children's hunting games reinforced a social order on the farm that assumed the authority of whites and the subordinate positions of blacks who were unarmed and hunting in different ways. Within this racial formation Johan made sense of himself and the people around him on the farm.

Not until high school had Johan ever entertained the idea of becoming a hunter by profession. There were few game farms around when he was growing up and he initially hoped, as many of his friends, to pursue a career as professional rugby player. Then, during a *braai* at a nearby hunting farm,

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<sup>146</sup> Translated from Afrikaans by author. Interview 6 January 2010.

<sup>147</sup> Translated from Afrikaans by author. Interview 4 January 2010.

organised by the local farmer's association, he saw pictures of his neighbour's family with trophies from all over Africa. As he admired the photographs taken in places such as the Congo and Botswana, he realised he could appreciate such work as well if he did not manage to excel in rugby. He then started to focus on a career as professional hunter. After all he had been hunting from boyhood and he reasoned that it also helped that "we have that tradition". The following summer he enrolled in a PH course and approached several outfitters to learn the trade by hunting with them for a week or two. Soon, John (who bought one of Johan's father's properties) invited him to practice for two weeks with Smith's Hunting Safaris. After this the Smith's family offered him a permanent job as farm manager and PH.

Luvuyo's first-buck experience took place much later in life compared to Johan's childhood hunting games. He shot his first buck when he was already in his thirties. After standard 5, Luvuyo left school and started working as teenager on the sheep farm where he was born, following the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Meanwhile the farmer's son, Steward, studied far away in the city. The farm was converted and gradually introduced more wildlife. Luvuyo worked for many years as skinner and tracker and witnessed the disappearance of the sheep. Luvuyo's parents, brothers and sisters all left the farm as the conversion was completed over the years. Hunting was "in full swing"<sup>148</sup> in the '80 and the political tensions in the country did not stop hunting tourists from coming. Steward decided to start his own hunting farm in the early 1990s. When Steward returned from university, Luvuyo worked with him on the hunting farm and learned a lot from Steward about wildlife; their food patterns, reproduction cycles, different species, and their behaviour. He listened when Steward told clients stories about the animals they encountered. The hunting business grew fast and other professional hunters and different outfitters came to the farm to hunt with clients. This led to Steward's discontent with free-lance hunting outfitters and professional hunters. He saw they engaged in unethical hunting practices like shooting from the bakkie or drinking during hunting and felt they were incompetent guides that harmed his farm lands and animals. When he decided to train one of his farm workers to become a professional hunter

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<sup>148</sup> Interview farmer 26 November 2009.

Luvuyo and his wife raised concerns about money, but Steward said he just wanted a “yes” or a “no”. After all those years hunting with Steward, Luvuyo practically only needed to work on his shooting skills and Steward took him to the shooting range to practice. And this is how he shot his first buck right before he went to the PH school where he was further socialized in the hunting game. Not only did he obtain a paper certificate, he also obtained the social qualifications and learned about the behaviour of professional hunters that aligned him with the trophy-hunting configuration of power.

### *Social distances in managing the trophy-hunting farm*

Johan and Luvuyo both started working as farm manager and qualified PH on Karoo hunting farms. Their experiences in management have been shaped through institutionalised positions on commercial farms that have been based on authoritarian paternalist relations. Within the racial formation that preserved social distance between the white farming community and black farm workers the position of manager has a different implication for their positioning in the power relations on the farm. Johan’s trajectory is congruent with the way things have been organised on farms for decades. Luvuyo is more ambivalently positioned between the farmer’s laws he extends as supervisor and the other farm workers on the farm. Luvuyo and Johan both preserved the traditional distance between farm managers and farm workers.

Luvuyo is employed on familiar ground, namely on the farm where he was born and raised. His position as supervisor and PH is significantly different than that of general farm workers as he now works closely with Steward Burns. His loyalty to the farmer materialized in his position as foreman, but he also knows what it is like to be governed through the farm laws when you are a farm worker. As farm manager he reproduces the paternalistic discourse he has been subjected to himself. He aims to convince farm workers that they should acknowledge the farm laws and win the farmer’s trust to better their situation. Hence, he is the living example of paternalistic rewarding. Steward has given him a car, a better house, and higher wages. This enables Luvuyo to have a better life and a promising future for his children. He articulates contradictions and feelings of

complicity as he feels he perpetuates the local power figuration as PH and farm manager:

I struggle with the people [farm workers]. I can see sometimes why farmers have always struggled with the people because I am also in that position now and I can see why farmers always fight with workers...If you look after your work and he does not have to say again how to do it...like I can do it myself, this has to happen this way and the boss wants it this way, if you can work like this with a white man, then you will benefit, if he has a good heart. That is another thing, if he has a good heart<sup>149</sup>.

...

Yes, it is tough! Because I stay with the farm workers, we stay in one place and I work with them so I cannot fight with them all the time. They think “he does not have to be the boss”, but there is a point where I have to say stop, and tell Steward that that person will not listen to me and so on. And then he gets a warning or loses his job. And I cannot beg for him it because this is my work. This is my future, my work, my children and so on and I like my work! I cannot always tell people what to do, it is their own future, this is how I learned as well, and that is why I am where I am now. I tell them, I also started in their position....One day you will be where I am!...Maybe because I am black you will not work for me, you work for Steward, but I report what you do to Steward, die *groot baas*, if you do not look after your work, then you will not be uplifted<sup>150</sup>.

Luvuyo is caught in the middle of the complex relationship between white farmers and black workers. Although he lives in close proximity with the other farm workers and he identifies with them (“*we* stay in one place”) he also feels distanced from *their* way of doing things. He now positions himself closer to how the farmer understands work on the farm. He interprets farm workers’ attitudes towards him as a lack of authority caused by his *blackness*. On the Karoo farm, authority is associated with whiteness which demonstrates how racial constructions shape people’s understanding of the world around them. Democracy has not changed this although Luvuyo suggests farm workers assume the farmers’ laws relaxed in the post-apartheid context.

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<sup>149</sup> Interview 4 January 2010. Translated from Afrikaans by author.

<sup>150</sup> Interview 4 January 2010. Translated from Afrikaans by author.

The people say this is the new South Africa; I can do what I want. But that is not possible! You have to obey the farmer's law because it is his farm...Us black people, we always misunderstand things. He feels he can now say what has to happen and everything, he now wants to manage, but you cannot have two bosses on one farm. That's the problem of today.

Local practices that people are used to persist because they are the systems of meaning through which people understand their place in society. In Luvuyo's perception as long as the farmers' laws are obeyed there are chances to be uplifted. Whether that actually happens highly depends on the good will of the farmer. Luvuyo reproduces the paternalistic thinking that developed on the commercial farms during colonial times. This is evident when he speaks about the way farm workers *should* behave to make the best of their lives. He also applies this reasoning when explaining why there are so few black PHs in the Eastern Cape:

Drinking is the big problem that causes us black people not to be PHs. But on the other hand, other bosses do not want to give farm workers the opportunity. Those are the two main things.... some farm workers are skilled but their boss does not want to give them a chance. They are the type of men who say "no, you are just a skinner, and you have to stay that way"<sup>151</sup>.

Following the paternalistic line of thought Luvuyo is fortunate that he was given the opportunity by Steward to get a better position on the farm, with much higher earnings that enabled him to buy a car (important for mobility in area with farms bigger than 10.000 hectares) and invest in his children's education on previously white schools in town. Other farm workers told me that farmers were not willing to support their PH ambitions. Timothy<sup>152</sup> asked a game farmer if he could support his studies, or send him to PH school, in exchange for his labour, but the farmer rejected and said that "they do not do this sort of things". The farm worker realised there were no prospects for him on the game farm to move up into other positions than casual farm labourer, and he left the farm.

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<sup>151</sup> Interview 4 January 2010. Translated from Afrikaans by author.

<sup>152</sup> Timothy 19 January 2012.

When Johan finished his education he immediately started working on the trophy-hunting farm in a management position. He works on unfamiliar territory and has to face his relative inexperience and lack of knowledge about the game farm's infrastructure, particularly compared to the farm workers who had been there for years. As a 22-year old bachelor he has to find a way to legitimise his authority:

Because I am from a farm I am used to work with farm workers. But in the beginning it was a bit *snaaks* [English: weird] because I was 22 and they had been longer than me on the farm. The longest serving worker had been there for maybe 7 or 8 years so he knows where the water is, the pipes, when a wind mill is broken, he knows when something is wrong, and I did not know anything so I depended on them for advice and explanation how the farm works. It was difficult for me to give them assignments and they had to listen to me and so forth, but now, because we worked together, I think they listen and they respect me. So now the situation is good for me, they are good men, they work well with me.

...

I have been very diplomatic; I asked [the farm workers] how do you usually do this and this? What tools do you use? And then we did it and then I knew of course how it works. Next time I tell them you get this and we are going to fix that and then we go.

Contrary to Luvuyo who has been working on the hunting farm his whole life, Johan entered the hunting farm in a senior position officially based on his educational qualifications, and unofficially based on his background as Afrikaner son of a commercial farmer who is used to tell farm workers what to do. Due to the institutionalization of certain positions for specific categories of people Johan feels it is 'natural' for him to supervise and give orders instead of asking questions and he easily assumes the role of manager in relation to the farm workers.

The spatial distance between Johan, Luvuyo and the farm workers on the hunting farms differs considerably. Luvuyo lives in the farm workers' compound where Johan stays right next to the guest lodge in a separate living quarter where he spends most of his evenings alone. Johan does not have friends or family on

the farm and does not associate with farm workers after work. When he hunts, he enjoys socializing with guests in the hunting lodge. He likes “interaction, I like to socialize, and I like people”. Johan identifies with the people who visit the lodge. Among them he feels more comfortable than with the farm workers who live around the corner and work with him every day of the year. He preserves a greater distance between him and the workers that asserts his superior status on the farm.

### **Access to land in the ‘New South Africa’: A Future in Farming?**

In the context of farm consolidations, conversions and increasing land prizes, access to land is becoming harder and harder in the Karoo. This shapes future prospects for Johan and Luvuyo who both express desire to engage in hunting and farming for the rest of their lives. In this section I describe how Johan’s embeddedness in a network of land owners enables him to invest in farming or hunting career. Luvuyo on the other hand solely relies on his own accumulated financial resources for the purchase of land or other capital assets necessary for an independent farming career. Although Luvuyo’s trajectory as professional hunter proves it is possible for farm workers to be uplifted, his future prospects in farming and hunting are limited due to his unfavourable position in the Karoo’s class stratification.

#### *Investing in wildlife resources*

Johan’s family owns two farms and his parents lease two additional properties that are used as grazing fields for their livestock. Leasing farms is quite a common practice and serves both commercial farmers with growing livestock numbers who cannot afford to buy more land, and it serves land owners who do not have the livestock numbers to keep farming but who want to hold on to their property. Lease contracts usually go for 3 to 5 year periods and the tenant pays a price (dependent on carrying capacity on the property) per animal and per month to the land owner. Hence, lease agreements enable land owners to hold on to the land without using it themselves. Johan affirms that land is a valuable asset in the context of skyrocketing land prices in the region.



The last 3 to 4 years prices started to hike up more every year, people thought properties would not sell for those prices but there were people who bought it for those amounts and every year it gets more expensive, it is shocking. There is a farm that they sold 8 years ago for just under 2 billion rand, then we all thought this is insane, and that man has sold that property again for I believe 14 billion rand or something like that, thus within ten years the price increased annually with on average 1 billion rand. This is unbelievable.

Irrigated properties are most expensive, which makes sense in the dry Karoo region, and the presence of wildlife species adds value to properties as well. Clearly, it becomes harder to buy a farm in the region and commercial farmers are finding other ways of scaling and diversifying their activities to make their land profitable. The times where farmers bought each of their sons a farm once they were ready to start their own enterprise, are over. This traditional practice has become unaffordable. Moreover, not every farmer's son envisions a future in farming. In Johan's case his two older brothers each inherit a family farm, which means Johan inherits livestock and money that he plans to use for expanding his hunting activities. Johan already invests in wildlife species on his father's farm. He has introduced several species on the property, practices game management and occasionally invites South African hunters to come and hunt for money. The commercialization of hunting has transformed social events related to hunting such as inviting friends over for a driven hunt like the day Johan shot his first buck. Hunting is a business activity. Johan wants to obtain his dangerous game licence (dangerous game PHs earn twice as much a day as regular PHs), an outfitter licence, buy a game lodge and take clients out to other hunting properties (including the family farm) to hunt trophies. He feels there is no future in livestock farming:

No, I love farming but there is not so much money in farming, it is a nice lifestyle, but look how big your farm must be to make money out of sheep and goats, you need 5 farms, and I cannot buy that, you either need to inherit or start small and suffer. I will go on with wildlife, I want to be a PH, if I can get land I will get some cows or something but there are other ways of making money. Because I love the outdoors I do not necessarily have to farm, I can also hunt. Then I am still in the *veld* and earn money.

Though Johan inherits no farm, he will have enough capital to expand his hunting activities and invest in wildlife resources. His social network allows him access to land for hunting and lucrative wildlife investments. This way young men like him make more money out of natural resources while maintaining their “outdoor” lifestyle and established position in the commercial farming landscape.

*Cultural anxiety in the commercial farming landscape*

Luvuyo’s future prospects in farming or wildlife exploitation are far less secure. He is frustrated with the ‘new South Africa’ and the way things have changed. In Luvuyo’s narrative democracy disrupts and dislocates Xhosa culture on the Karoo farms. He feels the ‘new South Africa’ transforms Xhosa culture more than in *dai dae* (those days) meaning the apartheid era. The manager observes that some white farmers do not want their farm workers to “practice their culture” on the farm any longer. The relocation of cultural rites makes him anxious about the traditions that he finds important. Cultural practices such as male initiation have partly moved to the vicinity of town. The mass organization of the ceremony and increased access to formal healthcare, which is traditionally a taboo but enforced by government, altered the practice dramatically. With horror Luvuyo shares that the new generation of men demand “iced water and pudding” in the bush where they recover from circumcision procedure and are prepared for manhood in the community. The iced water and pudding are metaphors for youth aspirations shaped by exposure to urbanized lifestyles, mass media and consumption society. Luvuyo believes that black people do not practice their cultures in the “right” way anymore. The farm manager spoke of a young boy who came to work on the farm and who addressed him in English which agitated him immensely:

He is a Xhosa and he cannot speak his own language. He can only speak English. I ask why? Because his mom and dad just spoke English with him. He cannot speak his own language! This is the new South Africa you see? This is

the new South Africa....Home, religion, culture, where you stay and at work, everything has deteriorated in the new South Africa<sup>153</sup>.

Although the boy did not speak Xhosa, Luvuyo felt he should speak it because that is his “own” language. Such expressions indicate a sense of loss in the form of language that is imbued with cultural meaning<sup>154</sup>.

The indication ‘new South Africa’ is often used by farm workers as a metonym for the decay of culture and tradition. This parallels Fanon’s observations on the psychology of oppression in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon writes that “a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language” (2008:9). He describes how colonized people always encounter “the problem of language” as their social status can only rise when they adopt the colonizer’s language. From Luvuyo’s perspective if a black man does not “possess” the Xhosa language, he does not possess the world expressed through that language. Ultimately when people stop speaking isiXhosa; their culture will disappear; and their world will come to an end. This fear is articulated in the following way by Luvuyo:

Most people, most Xhosas do not practice our cultures as we should anymore. We do not want to; we do not want to keep Bantu; we do not want to keep Xhosa. We want to keep white.

As Luvuyo’s distance to the world of the farmer is reduced he fears the decline of traditions associated with Xhosa culture and language. Discussing and following up on the way Fanon articulates the problem of colonial cultural alienation, Bhabha has argued that identification and the image of identity “marks the site of an ambivalence” (2004:61/73). In a postcolonial racist world he recognizes an alienated image of man; “not Self and Other but the otherness of the Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of the colonial identity” (Bhabha, 2004:63). In his position as foreman Luvuyo recognizes the farmer when he says that “I can now see why farmers struggled with people”. Being positioned on the cultural boundary dividing the world of the farmer and the farm workers Luvuyo

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<sup>153</sup> Dit is nou die nuwe Suid Afrika. Van die huis af, van die geloof, van die cultures af, van wa jy bly in jou huis, tot in die werk, is alles agter gegaan met die nuwe Suid Afrika...

<sup>154</sup> Similar anxiety is expressed in relation to Afrikaans language.

holds on to that what binds him to the other farm workers, Xhosa culture and language.

In Luvuyo's case his future prospective of independent farming is less evident than in Johan's case. First of all Luvuyo inherits no family land or capital. On the contrary, his income supports a range of dependents that have been less fortunate than he. Secondly, Luvuyo is not embedded into the social network of land owners in the area. This disables him to expand his hunting activities and work as a free-lance PH. He said he cannot be a free-lance PH because he does not have land, an outfitter business, or licence. Moreover, in order to take clients hunting on other farms he needs access through land owners. These are mostly white farmers that do not know or trust Luvuyo who is not part of their social circles, not part of their hunting and farming organizations, and has not gone to school with them or their children. But Luvuyo dreams of having his own farm one day:

It is my dream to have my own farm...I just want to farm animals that I like. I will buy some sheep and Nguni cattle because these are good cows, they are for meat, I like them! Beautiful colours and I do not want Angora goats because they are very sickly so I prefer a *boerbok* and not a Merino sheep, but rather a *dorper*. I wish I can have those three things on my farm, and some game.

It is remarkable that Luvuyo desires to farm exactly with those animals that white commercial farmers do not keep. It shows that land-use choices and animal species relate to preferences shaped by tradition and meanings attached to different animals. To find out whether his dream of an independent farm can be fulfilled Luvuyo once visited the Land Bank in Cradock. There they told him that if he wants to get a farm through the government land reform programme he has to apply with a group of people. That idea does not appeal to him at all and thus he did not proceed to apply for land redistribution. He has not obtained information at the regional department of land affairs about land reform procedures. And his wages are not sufficient to afford to directly buy land and invest in animals as well. Setting up a farm requires enormous capital investments, just like the market-driven redistribution schemes are a costly affair for government. Land reform procedures are complex, bureaucratic, slow, and ambiguous so anyone needs assistance from experts in that field to enter in a

land reform process. Clearly, Luvuyo lacks knowledge and connections to access this type of support.

In 2009 the media discussed many examples of failed land reform projects in the country. The popular policy and slogan “if you do not use it, loose it” allowed government to take back so-called unproductive farms that were redistributed to black farmers. Luvuyo watched the news and agreed with the minister’s course of action. According to him they should redistribute farms to people that know the farms and grew up there, in other words persons like him. He immediately adds that black people cannot know how to manage a farm anymore because first their land was taken away from them by white people and then they structurally did not have access to agricultural schools and institutions where people are taught to manage a commercial farm. And currently farm labour is decreasing, people are moving away from the commercial farms to town, and this way farming experience among black people is getting less and less. He observes a decline in interest and opportunities in farming among the future generation: “youngsters just walk around in the township with their cell phone all day”. In Luvuyo’s opinion, these processes seriously impede the prospects for successful land reform in the country.

Due to lack of financial and social resources to become an independent farmer or game farmer Luvuyo is tied to ‘Karoo Hunting’ and Steward Burns as wage worker. On the farm Luvuyo is assured of guiding many clients and doing a lot of work. He is busy hunting throughout the year<sup>155</sup>. Steward does the administrative part of the business while Luvuyo takes care of all the hunting and general farm work. Consequently, more and more hunters have pictures or movies of their trophy hunt with a black South African PH. Naturally, others then want to experience this as well and that is how clients get used to the idea of hunting with a black PH assures Luvuyo. He is convinced clients like to hunt with him as they feel he is a “real South African”, meaning a black African, who can tell them more about “African cultures”. He sees his ‘Africaness’ as an asset with the potential to tip the balance of power in the trophy-hunting sector. Some hunting clients encourage him to come to the hunting conventions in the United States where hunting trips are sold and booked in advance. It would be a

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<sup>155</sup> Interview February 2011, translated from Afrikaans by author.

wonderful opportunity for him to meet more clients and industry members. But Steward will not send him abroad and Luvuyo refuses to pay a flight ticket to travel and promote Steward's business on his own expenses. After all, this suggests the farmer deliberately keeps Luvuyo in an outsider position to re-assert the symbolic boundaries of the game-farming community that imagines itself as mostly a white class of landowners. In Steward's case he has been willing to 'uplift' Luvuyo's status in the local class configuration as long as his position is still that of an 'incorporated outsider' whose degree of social mobility is still regulated by the established. Confronted with this interpretation Luvuyo concludes: "that is just the way it is around here".

### **Social boundaries and the workings of race and class in the trophy-hunting landscape**

Luvuyo's entrance to the trophy-hunting landscape combined with his restricted mobility prospects indicate a class struggle taking place within the contours of Karoo's established racial formation. The fact that his position is highly exceptional in the context of the Karoo is telling for social situation and signals a contradiction within South Africa's non-racial society. The established are managing to incorporate outsiders in the trophy-hunting sector on their terms and conditions. Therefore people like Luvuyo are 'incorporated outsiders'; not excluded on the basis of racial classification, but included with limitations. Ballard refers to a similar dynamic in the context of whites determining access to urban suburbs when he writes that the established under apartheid re-assert their position not through the justification of racial segregation any longer, but instead through discourses on the legitimacy of the qualifications they determine for inclusion (2005: 83). This way the established control the shifting power relations in post apartheid society.

In this chapter we saw the limited mobility options for black farm workers on the hunting farm. The asymmetric power relations on farms and stigmatization of farm workers as culturally different and incapable of performing roles now attributed to the established. Meanwhile, cultural anxiety grows as the place of Xhosa culture and language on the commercial farms is highly insecure. The black professional hunter is an exceptional outsider allowed among established

hunters and farmers who are all white; he conforms to their group norms, dresses like them, took over the paternalist discourse towards farm workers, and went through their hunting learning institutions. Yet, he is not part of the established because he is at the same time a threat to the power of the established and their image of themselves.

Moreover, the post apartheid state attempts to transform the power configuration in the hunting world as well. Steward Burns mentions during an interview that there is “pressure” to train black South Africans as professional hunters and that a special PH school is designed to accommodate “them”. Paradoxically, this would again separate black people from white people which contradict the ideals of the ‘new South Africa’. But for the established this is a workable solution that to some degree retains the distance to outsiders and newcomers in the sector. In 2011, during the multi-stakeholder workshops of our research project, a representative of a national game farmer association proposes that an appropriate place for black professional hunters would be the state-owned land and reserves in need of trained hunters and guides. In other words, black PHs belong to state-controlled land and game farmers belong to, and control, privately owned hunting areas in the country. Luvuyo’s employer thought that illiteracy was not a problem for black people participating in PH courses since “you do not need to be literate to be a PH; it is the outfitter who does the forms and the papers”. Hence, according to this white farmer black people can be included into the hunting sector when the PH position is reduced to a particular performance in the hunting field and the business part is left to a white outfitter whose social mobility is less limited as a result.

Trophy hunting is a symbolic resource for farmers to re-appropriate land designed according to their images of the landscape and the categories of people performing different roles in it. These images are projected on hunting tourists and further shape the ideas and assumptions of what constitutes a good PH and a good hunting field. In the hunting game and on the hunting farms a problematic asymmetric power configuration is preserved through the construction of race categories that prevent Luvuyo from furthering his career in the hunting sector. Social boundaries were further illustrated by Johan’s embeddedness into networks of land owners and outfitters that enable access to social and financial capital necessary to invest in wildlife resources and to secure

a place in the hunting sector. The re-configuring of power in the Karoo is shaped through class and race constructions that impede South Africa's transformation process.